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AUTHOR Dunham, E. Alden
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ABSTRACT

"Every ill besetting our colleges and universities is related in one way or another to the Ph.D. degree." All the worthwhile innovations with which the colleges are responding to the current crisis in public confidence won't have much effect unless the cause of the problem--faculty training--is tackled. The Ph.D. degree as the sole legitimate degree for college teaching is outmoded, yet the evidence suggests that most of the state colleges are trying to pattern themselves after the great research universities, instead of developing programs more suitable to the teaching needs of the liberal arts and community colleges, where most of their graduate students teach. A new teaching degree, as an alternative to the Ph.D. is needed, not because there is a shortage of Ph.D.'s, but because there is a surplus of inadequately trained college teachers. The Doctor of Arts should become the standard degree for college teaching. Some institutions have already established such programs. No institution should do so unless it is willing to accord the D.A. degree equal status with the Ph.D. For this reason many prestigious universities are reluctant to set up programs. The strongest of the state colleges and regional universities should offer the D.A. degree, which should be under the jurisdiction of the arts and science faculty, take three years, be interdisciplinary in nature, and teach the students something about teaching and higher education. (AF)

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Rx for Higher Education: Doctor of Arts Degree

E. Alden Dunham
Executive Associate
Carnegie Corporation of New York
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Higher education is in serious trouble. Public anger is basically due to the consequences of a wide gulf between what the public thinks it is paying for and what faculty members think they are paid to do. People pay taxes and tuition to provide undergraduate education for their sons and daughters; the academic profession assumes that it is paid to do research and advance knowledge. Indeed, the reward system pays most to those who care least about undergraduate teaching. This gulf between public and professional expectations is the single most important issue in higher education today.

But why the gulf? It is due to the overriding influence of the graduate school of arts and science and the Ph.D. degree, so thoroughly described by Jencks and Riesman in The Academic Revolution. The German research university, superimposed on our English college tradition in the form of what we know as the graduate school, now runs the whole show. Specifically designed to train researchers, the Ph.D. degree is so narrow and specialized that even industrial research directors complain of its inflexibility. As for college

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teaching, graduate programs produce competencies, values, expectations, and a reward system that are simply incompatible with undergraduate liberal education. The research Ph.D. degree is inappropriate for most college teaching jobs in this country, especially at the lower division level. Yet it remains the only respectable degree for college teachers as we move into an era of mass higher education. The percentage of Ph.D.'s on the faculty continues to be the index of quality. Our system makes no sense.

Every ill besetting our colleges and universities is related on one way or another to the Ph.D. degree. Student alienation, irrelevant curricula, uninspired teaching, ironclad adherence to what may be outmoded traditions, absentee professors, extravagantly high costs of research and graduate education--these and other ills are tied to a system in which people trained to do research will end up teaching badly. Many colleges are responding to the current crisis in public confidence with worthwhile innovations: new curricula, different teaching techniques, institutes and other inter-disciplinary end-runs around academic departments, new residential arrangements, greater faculty and student involvement in decision making. But these changes treat the symptoms, not the cause of the problem. We must get at faculty training.

First let me illustrate more concretely what goes on in one sector of the academic world. In the spring of 1968 I visited a number of state college campuses while in the process of putting together a study of these public four-year colleges and regional universities for Clark Kerr's Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (Colleges of the Forgotten Americans, McGraw-Hill, 1969). Mostly former teacher's colleges, the membership of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities consists of roughly 275 institutions enrolling a quarter of all students in higher education. Expanding their enrollments rapidly and trying on different functions, many of these places have an identity crisis. Actually, they can be placed along a spectrum of development from single-purpose teacher's college to multi-purpose university--from Kansas State Teacher's College in Emporia (the only public four-year college in the nation that still calls itself a teacher's college) to the State University of New York at Albany with its 19 Ph.D. programs. Community colleges have charted their course and the traditional state universities likewise have their sights set, but the emerging or developing public institutions in the middle are very much in a quandary as to their roles. Despite the debate, the direction of their movement is, in my opinion, appallingly clear.

The movement along the spectrum is toward the status, the prestige, the recognition that comes to Harvard or Berkeley, or at least to Michigan or any one of a number of major research universities.

Instant universities have been created in many states simply by changing the name from "college" to "university" without doing much else. But university status does imply graduate studies and research, and the expansion of graduate programs leading to the Ph.D. becomes central to the interests of the faculty. Increasing freshman enrollments bring forth higher appropriations from the state legislature to hire, for example, additional English instructors to teach freshman composition. These new research-oriented Ph.D.'s, straight from graduate school, couldn't care less about teaching freshmen, much less the kinds of average students found at state colleges. They would rather transform the state college into what they have just left as students. They want graduate programs, research, and their own graduate students. As their numbers increase, they gradually begin to outvote the older professors who have education degrees and are concerned about providing teachers for the public schools.

At the very least, undergraduate teaching becomes just as professionalized as graduate school instruction. At the very worst, undergraduate teaching is neglected altogether. General education falls by the wayside. One cannot find sufficient numbers of faculty members willing to take time away from their narrow specialization for something which does not contribute to research, publication, and from there to promotion within the department. Loyalty is to the academic guild, the discipline, not to the state college.

With the rise to power of the academicians comes a meritocratic view of quality that places a premium on intellectual ability and academic accomplishment. Higher admission standards are demanded. Quality is equated with SAT scores and the precentage of graduates going on to law, medicine, and graduate schools of arts and sciences. The success of the college and its students becomes narrowly defined in these terms. It leads to a derogation of what James B. Conant refers to as a traditional American ideal. derived from our frontier heritage, namely, equality of status of all forms of honest labor. Applied programs take on second-class status. Teacher education, business administration, nursing, and other applied fields lose respectability. The institution becomes

increasingly national in outlook rather than regional, as exemplified in its programs as well as in its recruitment of faculty and students. And with it all comes a loss of institutional coherence, warmth, and friendliness; the atmosphere changes from soft to hard.

Tensions emerge. There is a presidential power loss that parallels a faculty power gain. This is a sufficient problem in itself, but it is accentuated by a context in which institutional autonomy runs into system-wide state control and allocation of resources. A rat-race develops in the scramble and competition for funds--whether from the state, federal government, or foundations. Costs soar as high-priced faculty are bought, as higher-cost graduate programs are mounted, and as libraries and computers dot the landscape. Finally, of course, the cozy college of 2,000 becomes a gigantic multi-versity of 20,000 to 40,000 where, as Clark Kerr has said, "the only common interest is the parking problem."

Most of the places I recently visited showed evidence of these tensions and problems--not that all the institutions are enroute to full university status, but rather that in one way or another they show signs of heading in that direction. Very few

will ever become first-rate research universities. They will not attract enough money, top-flight research faculty, or academically oriented students. At present, there are anywhere from 20 to 50 major research universities, depending upon one's standards. 90% of the Ph.D.'s who enter the academic world each year receive their degrees from 50 universities. Most colleges will find it impossible to fight their way into this group. They are doomed to failure if they persist. Their faculties will be frustrated and their students will suffer.

State college people are likely to say that I have incorrectly stated their goals. They point out that theirs are multi-purpose teaching institutions educating the middle-class backbone of the nation: teachers, businessmen, engineers, civil servants of all kinds, housewives, nurses, and so on. They say that they are not in competition with the state university are are not especially interested in educating professional scholars, doctors, or lawyers. And they say that they are regional in nature, meeting the needs of local students through programs designed to respond to local employment opportunities. I am convinced that these stated purposes are subverted by the very nature of the system. As long as the only source of respectable faculty members is the leading graduate

schools in major universities, state colleges will be automatically led toward these institutions as models.

Moreover, the situation will get worse in the 1970's as the supply-demand relationship for Ph.D.'s flip-flops. The bull market for Ph.D.'s is over. State boards must hold the line against the demands of emerging universities for Ph.D. programs. Instead of a shortage there will be a surplus of Ph.D.'s first in the sciences and social sciences and finally in the humanities. This means that more and more research specialists unprepared for teaching will be inundating state colleges, liberal arts colleges and--heaven forbid--two-year community colleges where Ph.D. training is irrelevant to the realities of most classrooms.

There are now 1,000 community colleges enrolling 25% of the students in higher education. This means that about half of all undergraduates attend either a public state college or a community college. Enrollments in these two institutions will continue to expand as they assume the major burden of inexpensive mass higher education throughout the United States.

In this new era the Ph.D. degree as the sole model for the

preparation for college faculty members is an anachronism. It simply won't do. What is the solution? There is certainly no easy one. One is tempted to say that the graduate schools must change, that Ph.D. training must somehow incorporate a knowledge about and respect for undergraduate teaching. Indeed, people have said this for years. My view is that basic change is unrealistic and may indeed be unwise. The academic revolution has brought with it much that is undesirable, but it has made the best American scholarship second to none in the world. (Scholars admit during coffee breaks that much of our research is terrible.) At the major universities, post-doctoral work is as much a part of the academic scene as freshman instruction. These institutions are in many ways at the center of our national life, and we are increasingly dependent upon the work of men trained at the highest level of Ph.D. and post-doctoral programs.

What is needed is a major innovation in the form of a new teaching degree as an alternative to the research Ph.D. I stress the point that is is not the shortage of Ph.D.'s but a surplus of inappropriately trained college teachers that prompts this proposal. As it is, about half the Ph.D.'s produced each year go into college teaching, the bulk of whom never publish anything. Predictions of

a surfeit of Ph.D.'s in the 1970's underline the immediate importance of diverting large numbers of aspiring graduate students toward a new degree that has relevance to the teaching tasks of mass higher education.

A logical progression is from the Bachelor of Arts through the Master of Arts to the Doctor of Arts. The D.A. should become the standard degree for college teaching in the United States.

The Ph.D. has long been a favorite punching bag. This proposal for an alternative is not a new one. Over a decade ago, mathematicians considered the Doctor of Arts but did not follow through. Since that time the concern for preparing college teachers as contrasted with researchers has led to so-called intermediate degrees--Specialist degrees on the one hand and truncated Ph.D. degrees on the other. Yale's Master of Philosophy, for instance, and the various Candidate degrees popular in the Midwest are simply traditional doctoral programs with the research dissertation lopped off. The Specialist degrees have been given mostly in second-echelon institutions and have been aimed principally at secondary school personnel. Whether they are under the thumb of schools of education or not, the image of the Specialist degree is

that of an education degree. This is a kiss of death when it comes to the hiring of college teachers. Moreover, there is general agreement that anything short of a doctoral degree is not substantively strong enough or attractive enough for top students who will want to be the peers of their Ph.D. colleagues.

The Doctor of Arts degree is not just an idle dream. Carnegie-Mellon University gave its first D.A. degrees last June. The Graduate School of the University of Washington authorized the development of D.A. programs in July, and a number of institutions are actively considering the establishment of D.A. degrees. In December the prestigious Council of Graduate Schools, while not formally endorsing the proposal, did accept a report of its committee on the preparation of college teachers which recommended the creation of experimental Doctor of Arts programs. A week earlier the American Association of State Colleges and Universities endorsed the idea. Both groups spelled out general guidelines as to what they had in mind. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education is likewise considering recommendation of the D.A. Meanwhile, at least one foundation (Carnegie Corporation of New York) is interested in promoting programs and the U.S. Office of Education is open to proposals for graduate fellowship support.

But which institutions should offer D.A. programs and what should they look like? All the guidelines thus far developed are in general agreement over what should be included. My own biases go something as follows.

A number of experimental programs should be developed in all fields of the arts and sciences for the preparation of teachers in two and four-year colleges, with special emphasis on lower division teaching. No institution should develop D.A. programs unless its faculty is willing to hire, promote, and pay people with this degree on an equal basis with Ph.D. faculty members. Major research universities will have difficulty meeting this test, but they must join in the cause. Otherwise, we run the risk of a real tragedy. Many prestigious universities turned their backs when mass secondary education became a reality with the attendant need for large numbers of teachers. Teacher education was left to the teachers' colleges. We face a similar danger now as we move into mass higher education. If the major institutions turn their backs once again, they are likely to regret that decision in the future even more than they have regretted the consequences of their inaction at the secondary level. Current graduate student disenchantment is likely to be

an impetus in the right direction.

The strongest of the state colleges and regional universities with many masters' and relatively few if any doctoral programs should also take on the D.A. Such a move is consistent with their traditions of teacher education and would serve a much more valuable need than pressuring the state legislature to duplicate existing Ph.D. programs at the state university. A few of the leading liberal arts colleges, either alone or in conjunction with a university, ought likewise to consider the D.A. program.

Admissions, program details, and the awarding of degrees must be under the jurisdiction of the arts and science faculty, not the education faculty. The D.A. degree takes three years beyond the bachelor's. Certainly, every attempt must be made to prevent the enormously costly and inefficient drag-out problems of the Ph.D. While standards obviously should be rigorous and resources plentiful, there should be no insistence that they be the same as those expected for the Ph.D. Vast research libraries, computer facilities, and extensive research laboratories are not necessary for D.A. programs. For this reason and because of the shorter duration, the net cost of training a D.A. degree holder

should be considerably less than that for training a research Ph.D. Facilities and resources appropriate for the task should be the measure of the program rather than application of Ph.D. degree standards.

The academic component should be coherent and represent the bulk of the work. While there may be some overlap with existing graduate courses, the program itself ought to be much broader and less specialized than typical Ph.D. training. In many instances it could be interdisciplinary in nature, cutting across traditional fields. As an illustration, the proposal of the German Department at the University of Washington involves courses in History, Music, and Literature--all in an effort to provide bredth. A D.A. dissertation or project should be considerably shorter and less ambitious in scope than the typical Ph.D. research project and should focus upon advancing the teaching of the filed rather than knowledge in the field.

For traditionalists, the most controversial part of the program is the education component, in which the most significant part is supervised teaching experience at the undergraduate level either at a two or four-year college. In addition, thereis related seminar work in such areas as the psychology of learning, the

history and sociology of higher education and, I would hope, a thorough examination of the role and responsibilities of faculty members within institutional settings. I personally would call for some attention within the education component to the growing interests of students and faculty members in affective as contrasted with cognitive learning. Humanistic psychology, sensitivity training--these terms describe a growing movement that has strong implications for the preparation of college teachers whose responsibilities for the most part will center around the general education phase of higher education. Too many faculty members are defensive with students; new relationships of trust and openness are needed.

The market for D.A.'s is enormous: state colleges, liberal arts colleges, even universities. Community college needs are so great that they must rely principally upon teachers with master's degrees, but D.A.'s would be more than welcome, especially as department chairmen dealing with the tough pedagogical problems faced by the two-year colleges.

Setting up a new degree for the training of college teachers is not a guaranteed panacea for all the problems of higher education. It will not automatically produce humane and concerned teachers, just as the Ph.D. does not preclude good teaching. And

it is true that we don't know a great deal about what it is that makes a good teacher. But one important goal for this different degree is to engage the next generation of college professors very early in their training with some of the educational dilemmas with which the older generation has begun to wrestle late in their careers. The new degree must be seen as an effort to create an openness to innovation and change, to challenges of traditional assumptions about curriculum content, teaching methodology, and, indeed, the meaning of higher education itself.

With a direct focus upon teacher preparation for undergraduate education, expensive Ph.D. programs and university status as a lure for ambitious faculty members might lose their appeal. At the same time, the professionalization of the undergraduate curriculum would be less likely to occur, and the now-meaningless phrase "liberal education" might take on new life. I think it highly likely that we are at a significant cultural divide in our history between our industrial past with its accompanying Protestant ethic and a post-industrial way of life with an entirely different value orientation and life style toward which young people are reaching. Faculty members attuned to what may be a new emerging culture

have exciting possibilities in revitalizing the notion of general education.

To sum up, the goal of the new degree is to produce people with a knowledgeable concern for teaching, students, their institutions--all without sacrificing academic competence.

I said at the outset that the gulf between public and professional expectations is the most important issue in higher education today. This gulf will be closed one way or another--either through something like a new teaching degree or through increasing public alienation from higher education and consequent unwillingness to finance it. This latter alternative would be good for neither the public nor higher education. It is up to higher education itself to take the lead in doing something positive to close the gulf, to turn the current consumer rebellion into consumer support.

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